

## Migration of Dalit Women Domestic Workers from Andhra Pradesh to the Gulf Countries | Text Transcript | CIRCLE

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This is a text transcript for the recorded webinar “Migration of Dalit Women Domestic Workers from Andhra Pradesh to the Gulf Countries” presented by the Canada India Research Centre for Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) and the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute (CESI) at the University of Guelph. The event was recorded on February 2, 2022. The guest speakers were Shailaja Menon and Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu.

Transcript:

**Elisa Cooper:**

Welcome everybody, my name is Elisa, and I am a former master's student in the capacity development and extension program at the University of Guelph, and also a former research assistant with the Canada India Research Center for Learning and Engagement. It's wonderful to have you all here for today's webinar, CIRCLE was established in February 2020 at the University of Guelph and aims to be an interdisciplinary nucleus in Canada for cutting-edge research on India and the Indian diaspora to showcase, advocate, catalyze, and foster an equitable respectful and sustained exchange of knowledge between Canadian and Indian scholars on complex, emerging, and unexplored topics related to sustainability and social and economic well-being. You can visit CIRCLE's website at [canadaindiaresearch.ca](http://canadaindiaresearch.ca).

Before we move to today's proceedings, I'd like to draw your attention to an upcoming event, the third of the India 2047 series to commemorate 75 years of India's independence, is education in India 2047 and it will take place on February 9th, 2022, with Nandini Sundar, Ashwini Deshpande, Rukmini Banerji and Franco Vaccarino. CIRCLE is also now on social media, on both Twitter and Instagram so please do follow us. There's also now the possibility of becoming a CIRCLE member, you can check out CIRCLE's website again at [canadaindiaresearch.ca](http://canadaindiaresearch.ca) for information on events, social media, and membership. Welcome to today's webinar: Migration of Dalit Women Domestic Workers from Andhra Pradesh to Gulf Countries. This is the third webinar in a series organized by CIRCLE with the Community Engaged Scholarship Institute at the University of Guelph.

Our speakers today are Dr. Sreenivasulu and Dr. Shailaja Menon. Dr. Sreenivasulu is a faculty member at the center for economic and social studies in Hyderabad. His research areas include studying the rural labor and land market migration in the agrarian economy. He has published articles on these themes in a wide range of journals. He has participated in international advanced professional training programs, including managing global governance and international futures in Germany. He has also worked with the migrant department of the international labor organization at Geneva. Dr. Menon teaches modern Indian history at the school of verbal liberal studies at Ambedkar University in New Delhi. Her research interests revolve around gender, urban studies, social exclusion, and marginality. She has published on these topics in national and international journals and has conducted research projects on

these themes. So we're very honored to have our speakers with us today. They'll have about 30 minutes for their presentation and then we'll have around 20 minutes for questions and answers.

During the presentation, I ask that everybody keep your keep yourselves on mute and keep your videos off. During the Q and A, if you have a question you can wave your hand, you can click the raise hand icon at the bottom of your screen, or you can type your question in the chat, and I can read it out to the speakers. If you'd like to say your question yourself, you can turn your video on and of course unmute yourself at that time. Please keep your questions and comments brief so we can hear from as many people as possible. The event is being recorded with the intention to make it available via the CIRCLE website. Okay, we'll now turn it over to the speakers. Go ahead.

### Shailaja Menon:

Yeah thank you Elisa, and welcome everyone. It's indeed really you know, a very interesting evening because actually after this project we're also you know, thinking of bringing out a decent publication out of it, and so the feedback and comments that we get from the you know, audience here would really be helpful because you know, unless and until we get some critical inputs, we wouldn't know where we are going and what questions are still remaining unanswered. So before Dr. Sreenivasulu starts his presentation I'll just briefly introduce you know the- the region that we are looking at.

So as you know, this study migration of women domestic workers to the gulf is based in Andhra Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh is a state in southern India, the 10th largest in the country, and as per the 2011 census accounts for 4.10 percent of the total population of the country. And the study you know, as part of the field work, the study also reveals you know the- the nature- the- the curious nature of literacy in the state because though for especially when it concerns the scheduled caste population with which we are you know dealing with here the literacy ratio is much lower than that of the general population. So if the state's literacy rate is 67.41 amongst the scheduled caste, it's only a 64.47 percent and again you know, that is also one of the reasons why Dalit women are not able to engage in the labor market. Another very pertinent issue that we found was you know, it's also about the dropout ratio of students.

So unfortunately the SC enrollment ratio, which is the schedule cast and enrollment ratio is around 82 percent, and this is as per the 2011 census. But again the dropout rate is almost half of it, and we don't know that in the last two years of the pandemic this question would have become much more acute, and this is-. So these statistics are part of the official records and apparently the state itself agrees that it needs to do a lot of you know, investment in the social sector because other issues like you know, maternal mortality and infant mortality, all those figures are much high and you know, so- so the social sector is also the problem which many of the respondents faced in the study and it is also revealed in the case narratives. So I request Dr. Sreenivasulu to start with the presentation, to take you through the methods of the study and some of the important findings. So over to you Dr. Sreenivasulu.

## Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu:

Thank you Elisa, I am really, extremely thankful to the institute giving me this opportunity. So business slide in election is there, this is the outline of my presentation. Context of this study. I will give you here some of the background of the study then present studied methodology of this study major, findings, and conclusions So I will start one quotation by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, that I measured the progress of the community by the degree of the progress which women have achieved. So this is a very relevant quotation. Now- now try to understand what the women position now.

So he strongly believed that the women should be entitled the equal status of the men, then he strongly criticized the Indian society where the degradation of the women- women have a lot of deprivations particularly in society in India. So I will give you now the brief about the Dalit women. The Dalit is a Sanskrit in the origin, the term; it means operation and the broken up community. So now it's in a more formally untouchable communities now. so particularly this Dalit women are placed bottom of the- the hierarchical pyramid. So here- the- there are systematically and structurally discriminated in the society because that the- the women have a multi form of the discrimination that's like as a Dalit, as a woman and as a poor, so they- they face a lot of discrimination everywhere, in the society because a lot of the women working on the low, unclean occupations and measurement of the adult women in- in our study also find out that working as a waste laborer where the highest exclusion in the world will never market.

So then if you understand there are landless measurement of the landless, then they do not have a basic resources also, they totally depend on the casual or wage labor. So this is the- we know not only that they substituted by the bacterial structure of the society here different they're not only facing problem with their own family but in the society also they're suffering a sexual assault rape or [indiscernible] these are the evidence the women subordinates position in the society. So I will give you some macro evidences as Dr. Shailaja already pointed out that this is the total population of Dalit in, India nearly 17 percent concentrated then in among Dalit, 50 percent of the women- then this- this- woman- how much land they hold if in terms of the land if- if you try to understand the human development indicators where the position of the women, particularly that women position if you understand they're still the 30-32 percent of the population living in the below power plant particularly. Then there is another important study highlighted that was done by the suburban in 2011, showing that the average is of the life of women is 39.5 years, fourteen point six years lesser than the average woman of the upper caste the upper caste hour is maybe the average days of the length, depth averages of the Dalit that life expectancy is in 55 years.

Then come to the- that are working compared to the Dalit and the non-Dalit women, nearly more than 80 percent of the gulf women are engaging in agriculture as because where leftovers are daily vegetables, but 16 percent of the women upper-caste women engaged in an agriculture, but there is a zero percent there engaging them as a casual laborers. In terms of the land ownership here, see 60 percent of the 16 percent of the Dalit population to compare it to maybe to the total non-Dalit population women, they- they have a less than two percent of the one result of the land. Then, how their maybe deprivation is we try to understand. So most of

the gulf women suffer extremely low-level of the literacy and heavily depend on the wage labor discrimination and the unique concentration on the unskilled and low paid activities and hazardous and manual jobs.

So they have a lot of maybe violence and sexual exploitation being- facing in the society this is the position that is maybe- this study focuses on the gulf migration the process and how the causes and outcomes of the gulf migration, but today this presents maybe we are together with Dr. Shailaja and myself working on a paper in this specific particular land the socioeconomic conditions of death women we try to understand here in the two parts what's the maybe local forces influencing to migration and another part of first migration what's the implications or impact on the social economic situation of the Dalit woman. So this is the present study to- trying to understand the two parts, so the local forces- what the local forces induced to the Dalit woman to migrate from the village to gulf. Then second part we are looking at implications. Next please.

So in the methodology particularly this study adopts two methods adopted, two methods, one survey method and non-survey method in the survey method we conducted in the questionnaire to survey the 130 women domestic workers who may be returned from the gulf and project working in the gulf because here there is no substantive number of the scheduled tribes. For this study, we excluded the scheduled tribes due to lack of availability of the households, then this study area- already- Dr. Shailaja highlighted it's in a- Andhra Pradesh in on the place there is a Raichudi, it's a Kadapa district and Amla Puram region is east where the district of well-known gulf pockets, generally a majority may be deprived in the community, so women have migrated to the gulf countries in this from this region. Then we adopt the snowball method and science sampling method to identify the farmer and current women migrants in this region. So next please.

Yeah, so here these major findings- we try to measure important findings so try to it could be seen here the education category is less than 35 years. The majority of Dalit migrant women fall under the group of the less than 35 years who are migrating. The non-Dalits are more than 35 years, they have then almost maybe 68 percent of the illiterates- belongs to the community, and 42 percent of the literates maybe is- they cannot be able to read and study but they're migrating internationally, they migrate. Next slide please. No. Maybe there is a missing one slide for our local forces, local factors what's the local factors influencing. Maybe next methodology. No! No! Not this!

**Elisa Cooper:**

I'm not sure which slide you- maybe the side is missing.

**Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu:**

Yeah I- I- missed it difficult to find out here. So what are the local forces we are trying to understand now, because we know the women have a triple workload or triple the problem because the- the health women do the housework- housework then again go for a field and work- work in the field then they will take care of children and again come back to do their

work again (housework) but compared to men, men simply they can take birth and you take food and directly go to the field and work and come back because they have such work- we can come count on some other work we count less, but even though the in- they still have a lot of ways, much difference compared to the women in the villages. The men get maybe more than 30 percent of wages than women.

So here in the labor market there is a lot of discrimination in waste discrimination, not only that the women and men were alcoholic, then they were- they're having bondages with the employers. They create bondages that they have some kind of semi-attached relations and pattern client relations these are very force on the woman. So the labor market, also the one of the important motivator or factor in the local push the- the women migrate out from the village. Then another- another important thing is then unfavorable family conditions that- we all know families and a basic unit of the society that should promote and give safety and support or encouragement to the women, but in our study, majority of gulf women are raised that the family is not behaving, not supporting them because there are harassments from the husband, there is harassment from the family- other family members.

So for... This is the main reason they directly approach to the middlemen who are the agent to directly send them to the gulf. This is- this is also the unfavorable family conditions also one of the motivators for maybe migration. Then another important item is the debt burden they have because the husbands borrowing the loan from the employer, then another source is the money lenders, then the commission agents. So they have an overload of debt but done that is also one of the important reason they come out to and migrate out from the villages. So these are all reasons for the family the chronic poverty they have, they're struggling with chronic poverty.

So these are major important local forces in using them to migrate from the villages to gulf. Then the occupations, then we try to understand what occupations they're working and how they can- what are the sources in the local- what are the sources they mobilize income, their income. If you try then I broadly get classified brought four sources of the generating income that's self-employment in agriculture, self-employment in non-agriculture, there's employment in agriculture, and waste employment in non-agriculture. These two we can compare before migration and after migration. What maybe the occupational pattern can- would be changed or not. So the large number of adult women before a migration that engaged in the unclean or polluting occupations like servants or sweeping, etc...

So you can say- seen here but I broadly classified in for sources- income sources then the data indicates that the large number of the belts engaged as agricultural laboratories, because engaged in the agriculture sector, 90 percent of the talents, whereas if you compare with the non-Dalit women then they're working as a self-employed Indian agriculture though zero the working as always elaborates in agricultural improvement agriculture none against sector, it's a minimum number. If- if you compare after maybe migration, this is brought drastic change, could be happen here the now the migrant- the migrant family members are not much involved in the agricultural activities.

They're- they've shifted to self-employment in the non-agriculture sector, and waste employment in the northern economic sector. They drastically withdraw from the agriculture activities. They could... Agriculture is happening in both the regions. This is the major occupational pattern that are changed due to the migration. The next slide please?

It is very important to try to understand where they use the references. The major portion of these remittances was used to repay the loan the debt. Repayment of the debt is a measured portion of- in the Dalit and non-Dalit; both the migrants. They use major portion of their remittances to repay the debt. So here, and the only minimal amount of the money appears here to use for the- the remittances for this household consumptions and their children's education. Then for the health purpose, is that not that's a considerable amount. Then these are very good the fact that the major portion they can- they can- maybe go towards the repayment of the debt and would depend on the commission agents or middle middleman to mobilize the migration cost. So before going to migrate these all migration costs only taken as a borrowing or taken blown from the with interest rate. Next slide please?

So he- here we can try to understand what maybe local reasons, local forces influencing the migration- migrations. The percentage of Dalit migrants, majority of migrants expressed here that the labor market displaced discrimination is the main motivator to migrate out from the village. In both the areas they- nearly 40 percent of migrants express that. Then non-Dalit, in the case of non-Dalits that is in a different case because they are no more- no more involved in the labor market that say, they discriminate- they do not have any discrimination and exclusion in the labor market. The percentage of Delhi migrants [Music] expects the unfavorable family conditions as a- as a motivator. That's nearly 30 percent in the eastern hour and 48 of the women's in the Karapa reason so...

Elisa Cooper:

There's about five minutes left.

Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu:

So, these are the main important motivating factors to come maybe migrate from religion. Next please. Oh man. No. This is like I'm trying to explain social status because economically, they can- they can economic status. There is some better off economically because there is no more a gradient maybe what in a previous study they have a pattern, kind relations or any upgrading attachments or semi attachments negative sector because a lot of health now no more in agriculture than agriculture but they're involved in non-agriculture, but their economic position is somewhat better but socially not that they can [Music] maybe be better off because it's an invisible society still they have a social stigma because they- they- this is such a stigma they can- they face from family members itself, maybe a lot of maybe the Dalit and non-Dalit women.

The migrant women engaged in the illegal activities, are immoral activities with [indiscernible] and the middleman, so they- they have such a stigma in the society that's the family members so don't allow some of the people- don't allow the- the migrant movements in the public places or somewhere in the occasions and this is- this is the next appealing because particularly in the

non-Dalit families, they- they are feeling that dishonor after they're coming back to the gulf. So I- I- feel there's not much social status improved due to the migration. Okay thank you now, I will- I request to the doctor to thank you yeah.

**Shailaja Menon:**

Yeah thank you Dr. Sreenivasulu for giving that you know, the data the- the larger picture and I would just like to share a few case studies which we got from the field, and you know which actually are testimonies to the difficult socio-economic conditions. One case study which is here on the screen you know Eshwarammais, so again as a woman from the schedule cast community who's been working in Kuwait for the last two years and she's the only woman from her village to have migrated to you know Kuwait and she was- so her daughter works as a domestic maid there. The next slide please.

Yeah, so this is the story of another lady. Yeah, so she points out that you know, she doesn't have any jobs in the village and what to do. She can't sit idle, so the only option is to you know look for migration and so she says that within the Dalit community, the- the Christian Dalits you know, you can find many people from the community working in the gulf and that is how they also got the idea and obviously you need to take the help of agents who charge a lot of money for doing the paperwork and you know, unless and until you pay them, things won't move and so we work in the houses offices hospitals etc. So she said that she was first sent to work in a school and then after two years she was assigned housekeeping duties in a hospital and you know after 20 years she could only come home twice and earlier, the payment was not very good but now it is much better and she also talks about you know, the- the problem with getting proper documentation and there's always the risk of deportation and how she had to pay 20 000 security deposit in the airport.

So, along with you know, the- the normal hassles which lie when you- you know, which always crop up when you migrate to a different country it's all compounded because of their low literacy levels, and they don't really understand the paperwork that is involved and obviously then the agents would you know always try to cheat them and yes language issues are one thing. So, that is the behavior by the you know, from the employer side. So this lady pointed out that yes, some owners do behave properly, the others one can't say, and she also cited an incident where you know one of the mates had a very you know, met with a very suspicious death and you know no one could figure out what really happened to her. Yeah, the next slide please?

**Elisa Cooper:**

Okay we're just out of time. Just to ensure that we have time for the questions.

**Shailaja Menon:**

Yeah I'll just briefly, just within two minutes I'll explain the- the third case study.

**Elisa Cooper:**

Okay perfect.

Shailaja Menon:

Yeah so this is- I'm not reading out the entire case study, but what really struck us was that this gentleman says that he and his wife worked in Kuwait for 15 years and they came back, and his wife went again later and then unfortunately his he says his wife was murdered and he couldn't you know, figure out what has really happened and unfortunately since he could not you know, do anything to secure justice the only option for him was to get whatever compensation was being offered and you know he took that compensation and came back and he did not even disclose how much money he got but he only said that he has deposited the money in his children's names, and many women migrants in the survey were also very reluctant to share any bitter experiences that they might have had with their employers. Yeah, so these are some of the case studies that we would like to share here, and we welcome any questions and observations.

Elisa Cooper:

Thank you very much Dr. Sreenivasulu and Dr. Menon for your presentation, we'll open it up now to questions. Just a reminder to keep yourselves on mute and video off unless you're asking a question, and I also just wanted to mention that this webinar is the third in a series that's organized by CIRCLE, along with the community engaged scholarship institute at the University of Guelph. So we already have a couple of questions in the chat so we'll start with those um and then I'll open it up to anybody else who'd like to ask a question. So, the first question is from Stein Montero - "what is the reason for Dalit households moving out of wage employment and agriculture when the women migrate?"

Shailaja Menon:

Dr. Sreenivasulu, why don't you start and then I can you know add on to what you're saying

Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu:

Could you repeat once again please?

Elisa Cooper:

The question is - "what is the reason for diet households moving out of wage employment in agriculture when the women migrate?"

Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu:

Yeah okay this is a very tricky question because the way is maybe, you can't maybe tell like a demand-supply relationship to where influence on the wages but see here the women once migrate to the gulf, but in the local uh labor market what happened between- who are they in the village also they may not be interested to involve in the agricultural activities even in young youth, they may not interest to involve in the agricultural equity or in the labor market. But now, we have a very serious problem that is not available in many ways. These issues...



### Shailaja Menon:

See if I may just check with what Dr. Sreenivasulu is saying, there is also now you know, in the rural spaces an increasing not disconnect but even a dislike for any kind of manual labor. So you- you don't find often- you don't find labor to do the routine agricultural work and even if you find you know, the- the charges are too high and usually in many villages this used to be done by the landless laborers and now another thing is that the government has also come up with many schemes.

So for example you have the rural employment guarantee scheme which ensures that for whatever work you do you get this much of fixed remuneration and similarly you know, you also have public distribution networks. So all these schemes you know in a sense makes people very not too much bothered about doing agricultural wage labor, they would rather move on to different spaces where you know, they can make more money so this is also uh one reason.

### Elisa Cooper:

Thank you very much. Okay, and Shirell is asking if "there are any organizations or structures for supporting Dalit women migrants and gulf countries to protect their social and worker rights".

### Shailaja Menon:

See it's- it's again a very difficult [Music] proposition because most of the women who migrate they are you know, as the study proves, they- they are like at the bottom of the hierarchy and the jobs that they are also doing in the gulf are jobs pertaining to the informal sector household labor or you know, cleaning women and you know those kinds of activities, and we know that in most of the gulf countries, labor rights are a big issue. So if you don't have the economic capital to begin with, you know it would be very difficult to negotiate, and many of them are also in a sense working for their survival. So as of now there are not many organizations that are you know trying to help these women.

### Elisa Cooper:

Thank you very much, and I just noticed also Deborah put a link to an organization that works with Nepal- Nepal women migration returnees, so if anyone's interested in looking at that you can see it in the chat. The next question is also from Deborah, she says - "I'd be interested to know what the effect is of this migration on left behind children, especially considering that majority of Dalit women going abroad are under 35". Yeah Dr. Sreenivasulu, would you like to start?

### Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu:

I can answer my part yeah. This is very interesting question that for children's education they also migrate to gulf countries because their children's education is very important for them. That's why a lot of children are studying in the private schools now. So we- we- we have evidence also that nearly more than 10 to 15 percent of their remittances invest on the children's education. Dalit women who are under the 35 years says that children studying in the private schools, they are very well- very good.

Shailaja Menon:

Yeah Elisa, you can go to the next question I don't have anything to add to this.

Elisa Cooper:

Okay yeah, the next question is also from Deborah says she'd be interested to know "what percentage of their wages go to pay the middle people".

Shailaja Menon:

See this is again very problematic because you know they wouldn't reveal these facts because every agent would have a different commission so, and- and these are not in the- these are not the regular networks so it's very difficult to figure out you know, how much exactly they are paying to the agents.

Elisa Cooper:

Thank you and the next question is asking "whether you can say more about how the migration experiences of non-Dalit women compared with Dalit women in the post-migration phase".

Shailaja Menon:

Yeah Dr. Sreenivasulu, will you start and then I can add my response also.

Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu:

Like you can- you can answer me Shailaja Menon: Okay fine. See in the study, one thing is that for most of the Dalit women, one major finding was that even after they come back and they invest their hard-earned you know resources for the family, none of them have land titles in their name. So most of the money is spent as Dr. Sreenivasulu has pointed out in his research, most of the money is spent in you know paying back uh the credits, the- the debt that the family has incurred, and often you know again they have to travel back to you know earn more money. So in that sense it's not that they- so far as we found out they are not actually enjoying the- the fruits of the labor if we put it that way. You know that is what we got from the conversations in the field. Yeah. So compared to the other women who are a little bit more economically stable.

Elisa Cooper:

Thank you very much and Deborah has a follow-up question asking about "why the Dalit families are choosing to send their children to private schools".

Shailaja Menon:

See Dr. Sreenivasulu I'm just starting and then you can add your comments also. See in the- you know if you look at the various studies especially concerning education in India, one thing is that generally people don't believe that you know the government schools the public funded schools give quality education, so they are they are not very how should I put it. Not efficient enough to teach kids or prepare them better for the future, so many families who can afford to, they prefer to send their children to private institutions because they feel that they are much

better trained there and especially for Dalits who have always been at the margins of society, even when where education is concerned. So obviously, if the parents feel that you know they have some money they would rather invest it in a private school because that is one way of you know, upward social mobility. So like Dr. Sreenivasulu pointed out, many women prefer to work and send their children to better quality schools. Yeah and Dr. Sreenivasulu would you want to add something?

**Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu:**

It's okay yeah.

**Elisa Cooper:**

Okay and the next question is from Fahad is "did your data say something about Dalit women facing castism from the Indian diaspora in the gulf?".

**Shailaja Menon:**

See that's a very interesting question and to be very honest, it was not part of our you know, the scheme when we started the research and maybe when we you know try to again go for the next round of field visit, definitely we will get into this, but this is really something very interesting, thank you for suggesting this. Yeah.

**Elisa Cooper:**

Deborah has another question regarding children and I also have a question that I wanted to add related to that so I'll share both of them. So Deborah says "I'm thinking about the children again. On average, how long are the women staying abroad and who is looking after the children?" and my question is related, "did you see in your study whether the- the social and economic conditions of the children of the next generation improved or if the same conditions repeated themselves generation after generation?".

**Shailaja Menon:**

Dr. Sreenivasulu why do- you why don't you start and then I'll also add to it.

**Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu:**

I think that because once a mother is absent, then who will going to take care of these children. See it's a big challenging issue whether father- father- because in the field study also we raised children's maybe small is over the maybe in the primary school for the small years. So there- there are really lonely feeling the mother- absence of the mother that they're socially maybe not good, but in terms of maybe who are studying in the high school- standard high school levels that's not maybe a big challenge that they're [Music] without mother also are studying good progress because their main intentions to they provide them a good education, but I can't assess maybe next generation or what their socioeconomic positions. It's a difficult process. Then please.

Shailaja Menon:

Yeah see actually you know if we again conduct this study you know say maybe after a decade or so you know you, make a visit to the same field then we can assess you know how the children have in a sense, what kind of progress is witnessed but right now the only fact is that you know they are able to go to some good quality schools but again you know, that can be ascertained only after time gap how far it has been productive for the family. Yeah.

Elisa Cooper:

And there's another question about migration patterns and whether these- these patterns show Dalit women primarily going to the gulf or if they also go to other regions of the world.

Shailaja Menon:

Yeah and Dr. Sreenivasulu, would you like to start? Yamanapalli Sreenivasulu: you can answer them.

Shailaja Menon:

Yeah, see the- the thing is that these migrations in a sense start with one person going and then there is a chain process you know, you know that person or you know the agent and that's how it works. So right now these people are only looking at the gulf because that is the only one can say, strong economic zone much closer to India. So again for example, going to the west would entail a very different kind of you know... You need different kinds of skills and basically these are all people who go to work for- as domestic maids and things like that. So right now this is the only region that they are looking at to earn some quick money.

Elisa Cooper:

And just a follow-up question is "whether this migration is continuing today during the pandemic or if the pandemic has affected the migration patterns at all?"

Shailaja Menon:

See obviously during the pandemic it has you know slowed down a great deal but then we need to figure out [indiscernible]

Elisa Cooper:

Thank you, and just one final question is about the- the mental health issues that these women are facing and then also about the- the lifestyle, "how is the lifestyle of the Dalit women when they're in the foreign countries. So maybe you can just take one minute to briefly answer these two questions and then we'll wrap up.

Shailaja Menon:

Okay yeah so I'll start and then Dr. Sreenivasulu can add. See mental health obviously you know it's- it's a very problematic time for them because you are away from the family the- the familial networks, it's a totally different space in terms of language, in terms of you know everyday challenges that you face.

So yes, women do have these issues and as some of the people in the case study so mental health is like you know- so you have people whose entire you know- so you- you have a person a gentleman of 61 years who was in the gulf and when he came back his entire family is working there and he's all alone at home. So there are these issues at multiple levels so it's not only the women who are you know suffering but even one can say the family also in a certain sense, but again you know it's- it's never been documented. For- for example in the case of Kerala, which has faced a longer gulf migration there are many studies which talk about it but not especially about the Andhra region and sorry the other question.

Elisa Cooper:

Maybe I'll just end there just because we're out of time.

Shailaja Menon:

Yeah right yes.

Elisa Cooper:

Thank you so much, I'm sure there's a lot more that could be shared about that as well as the lifestyles of- of Dalit women, but we'll just have to end there, thank you so much. Dr. Sreenivasulu and Dr. Menon, and this was a very interesting and informative presentation and I think we all have a lot to think about just a reminder that the next CIRCLE webinar will be the third of the India 2047 series to commemorate 75 years of India's independence and it will be "education in India 2047", and will take place on February 9th, 2022, and again please follow us on social media, on Twitter and Instagram and check out the check out the website: [canadaindiaresearch.ca](http://canadaindiaresearch.ca). You can also email us at [indiaresearch-L@uoguelph.ca](mailto:indiaresearch-L@uoguelph.ca) if you want to sign up for the mailing list, and we hope to see you on February 9<sup>th</sup> and thank you to the audience as well.

Shailaja Menon:

Thank you, thank you very much.

[End of transcript]